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The Importance of Mineral Resources

How important is mining? Mining is the bedrock of civilization. Without mining there could be no modern agriculture...no production of energy...no factories or offices...no schools or hospitals...no transportation systems or communications networks...no weaponry or national defense.

All of mankind's material needs must be dug from the earth, grown in the soil or taken from the sea. We must all remember that our horn of plenty begins with a hole in the ground.

As populations increase and civilization becomes more complex and technologically advanced, the demand for minerals increases. It is now necessary to produce over 40,000 pounds of minerals each year for every man, woman and child living in this country. In order to meet the constantly changing needs of our dynamic society, a vast array of mineral products must be supplied. In the history of the world, no nation has maintained the highest quality of life with a second rate mineral base. In order for our civilization to exist and to advance, we must explore for and efficiently develop our natural mineral resources.

Mineral products provide food, shelter, and income. The price and availability of these mineral commodities have a tremendous influence on the nation's productivity and on our standard of living.

Most of the items we use and consume are actual mineral products or they are manufactured from or grown with mineral products. The most obvious items are related to construction, transportation, and technology. However, agricultural products are also produced with the use of mineral products - from fertilizing to harvesting to packaging and, finally, distribution to the consumer.

It is important that all of us know the origin of common items so that we might be in a better position to understand some of the resource-related issues being addressed by all levels of government. With increased competition for the use of a limited amount of land, such as housing, agriculture, industry, mining, recreation, military and wilderness preservation, many important decisions need to be made which will affect all of us. We must be prepared to make balanced and objective decisions in order to develop mineral policies, which provide for the needs of the future.

MINING A SYMBOL OF THE PAST/ A CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE